

FY 2021 STRATEGIC PLAN

**FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF FIRE,
RESCUE, EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES AND COMMUNITY
RISK REDUCTION PRIORITIES**



July 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott Goldstein".

SCOTT E. GOLDSTEIN, FIRE CHIEF

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Prepared by the Planning & Accreditation Section, Office of the Fire Chief

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INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan presents and explains the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service's goals for FY21 that have been identified through dialogue that involved review of the previous year's successes and challenges, performance goals and metrics, and ongoing planning efforts. As an organization, it is imperative that we comprehensively plan for the future needs of the MCFRS and its customers by addressing all aspects of the department's capabilities to deliver effective and efficient emergency and non-emergency services, as well as capabilities to address the functional, developmental, wellness, and safety needs of the organization. The FY21 strategies relate to the department's 6-year master plan (*2016-2022 Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services, and Community Risk Reduction Master Plan*, dated June 28, 2016); contribute to achievement of the County Executive's [vision and priority outcomes](#) and the Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO) [Turn the Curve agreement](#); and ensures the department continues to operate within the parameters of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and the framework of the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).

The appearance of the plan has changed slightly, in an effort to be more transparent and accountable for our actions and highlight outcomes from the previous year. Additionally, some of the planning terminology has been updated and reflects the model below.



This plan presents the department's objectives and the corresponding FY21 strategies according to the Division(s) or Office¹ having primary responsibility for oversight and implementation, although multiple divisions and/or County partners may participate or contribute to certain strategies. The strategies laid out in this plan will be the primary focus of the department in FY21, although implementation of several initiatives is expected to extend into FY22. Several of these initiatives have been carried over from the FY20 Strategic Plan, which was impacted by the adjustment in operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The FY21 objectives and strategies enhance the following areas:

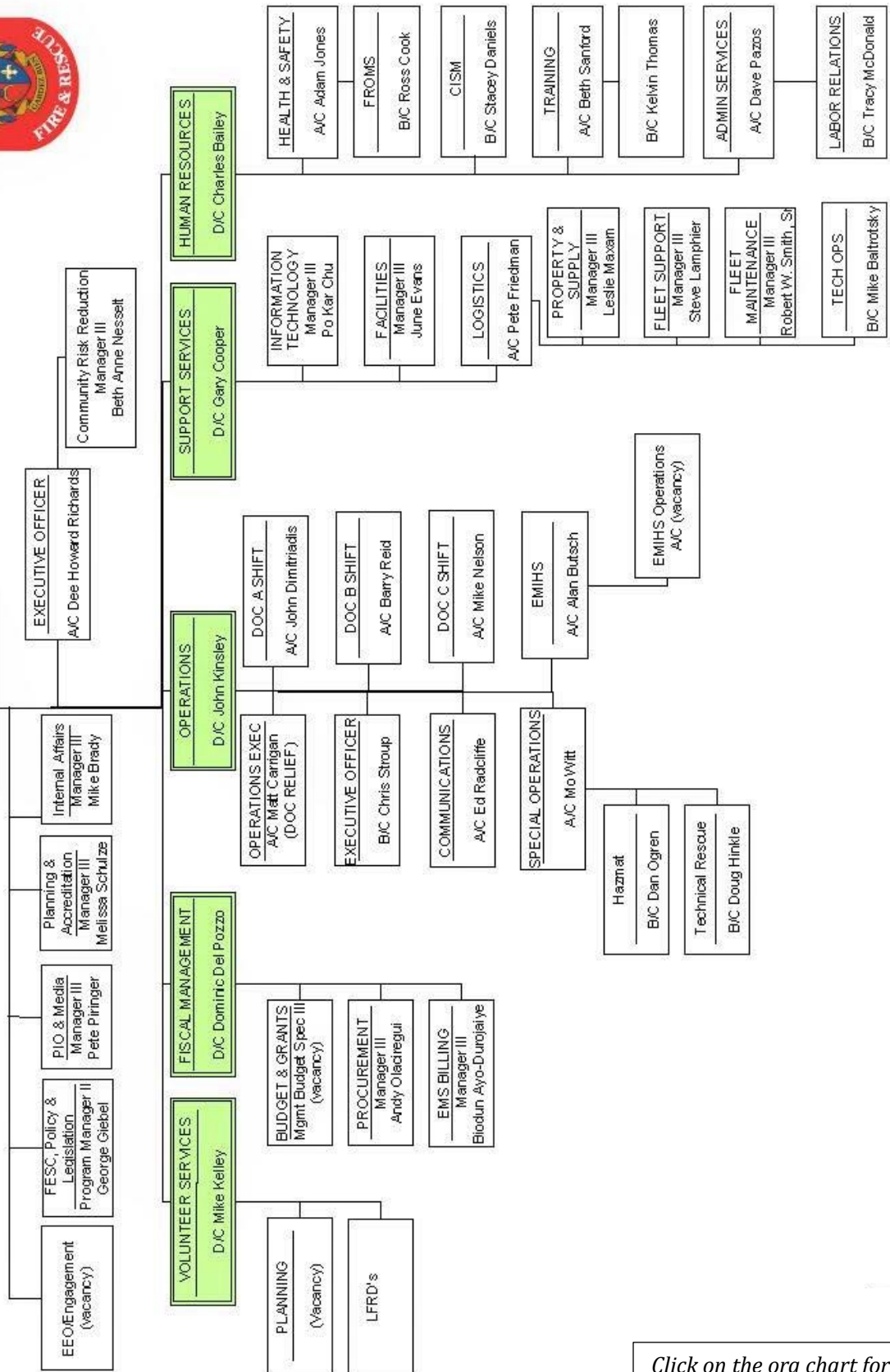
- Emergency communications
- Emergency Medical and Integrated Healthcare Services (EMIHS)
- Staffing
- Training
- Workforce health and safety
- Facilities' maintenance, renovation and construction
- Special operations
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Community risk reduction
- Information technology, data management, and analysis
- Planning, accreditation, and departmental performance
- Fiscal management

¹ i.e., Office of the Fire Chief

Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service



**Fire Chief
Scott E. Goldstein**



Click on the org chart for
an online version.

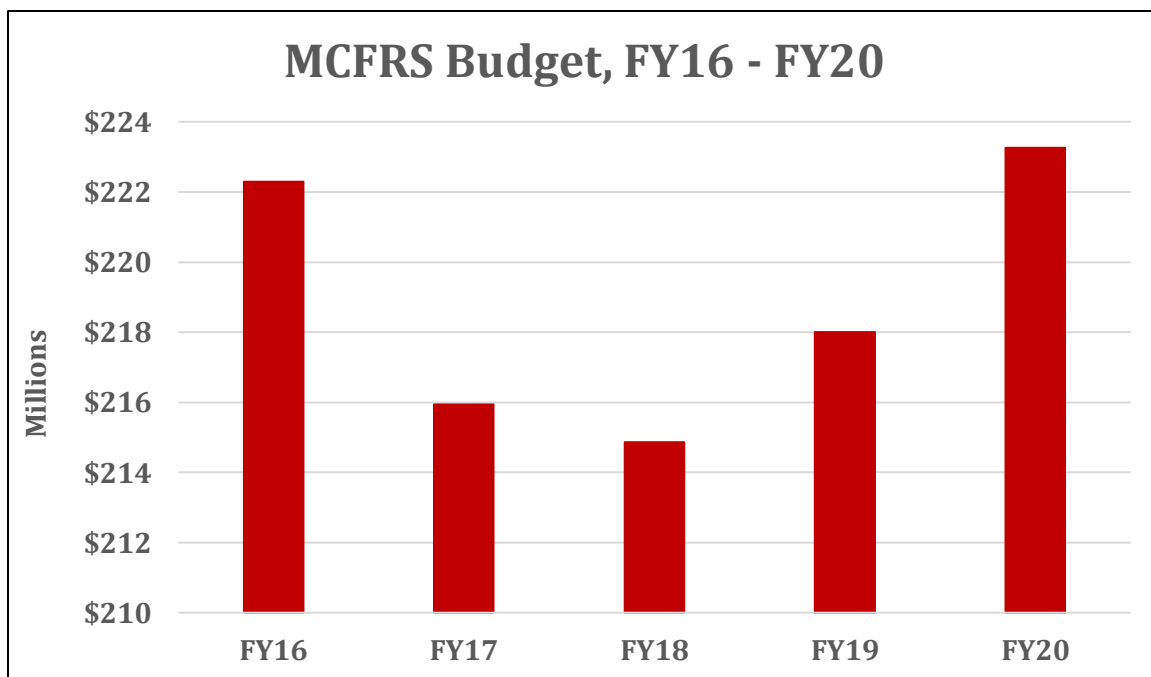
DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

About Montgomery County Fire & Rescue

Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service is a combination career and volunteer all-hazards department providing a full complement of emergency medical services, fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, swift water rescue, fire investigation, and fire and life safety resources and education.

The MCFRS is comprised of 1,197 full-time firefighters², approximately 900 volunteer firefighters and 79 full-time professional staff. The department operates from 37 fire and rescue stations (includes two rescue squads) strategically positioned to meet the emergency service needs of the residents, businesses, and visitors in Montgomery County.

The total recommended FY21 MCFRS [operating budget](#) is \$229,540,464, a 2.8% increase over the FY20 budget. Between FY16 and FY20, the MCFRS budget has increased only .4%. The MCFRS anticipates fiscal challenges over the next few years caused by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Montgomery County budget.

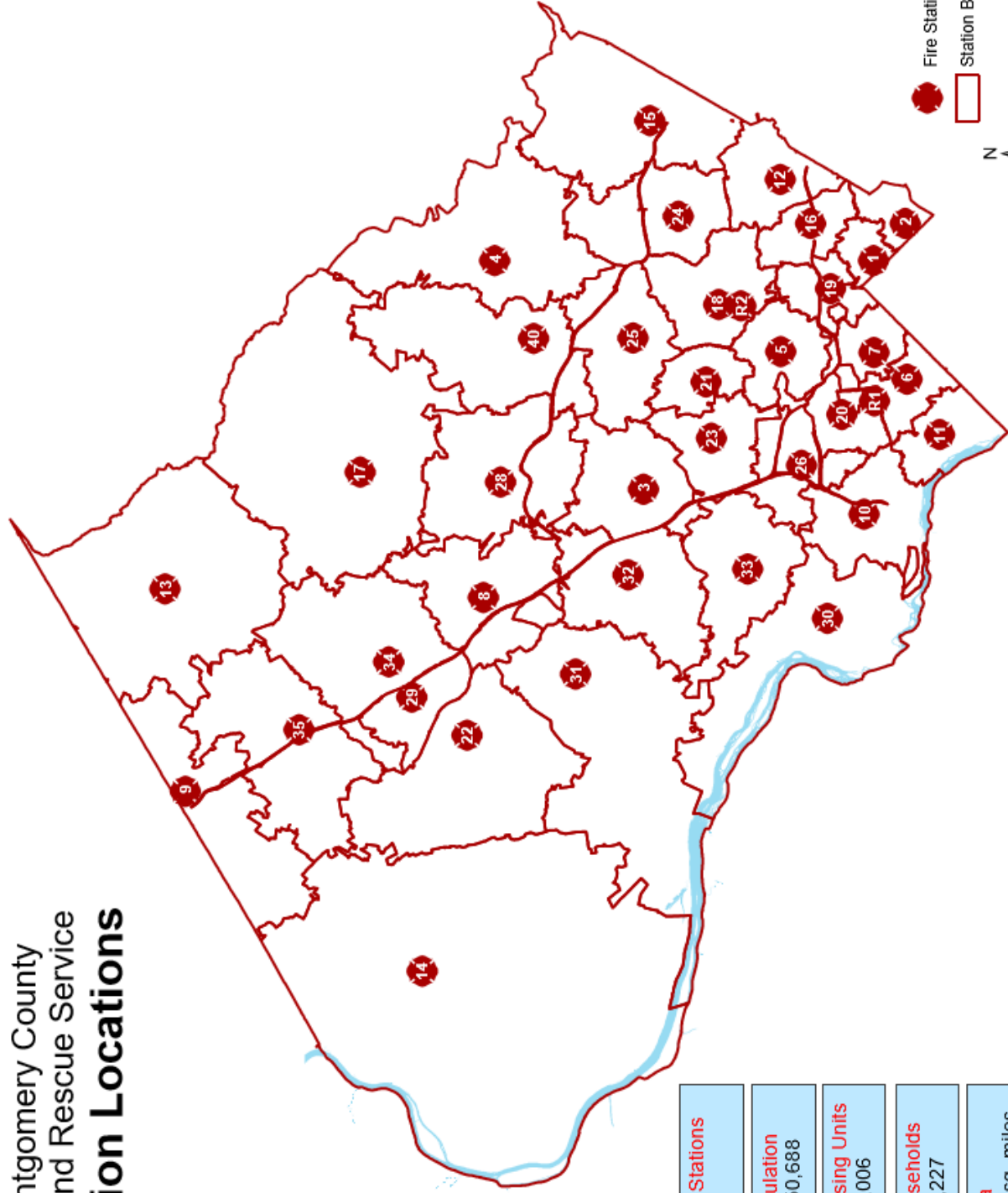







The MCFRS is accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, one of only 284 departments worldwide to achieve this standard.



² As of December 31, 2019

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service **Station Locations**



	Fire Stations 37
	Population 1,050,688
	Housing Units 391,006
	Households 370,227
	Area 506 sq. miles

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Mission

The mission of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service is to protect lives, property and the environment with comprehensive risk reduction programs and safe and effective emergency response provided by highly skilled career and volunteer service providers representing the County's diverse population.

Vision

The vision of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) is to enhance public safety and support quality of life through direct immersion in our communities, effectively blending outreach and education, and by leveraging our career and volunteer workforce to deliver exceptional services and improve our resiliency to meet increased challenges.

Guiding Principles

MCFRS providers are committed to the following principles:

- Deliver services to our customers with impartiality and excellence
- Promote the highest standards of safety and welfare
- Serve with integrity and mutual respect
- Recognize the importance of diversity of our workforce and communities
- Promote the efficient and effective utilization of our resources, and ensure that all organizations and personnel comprising the MCFRS share the responsibility for continuously improving their capabilities, effectiveness, and efficiency
- Be responsible for the honor of our profession and public service
- Promote equity and harmony among career and volunteer personnel
- Maintain and promote open honest communication, creativity, and competence
- Be accountable and ethical
- Continuously improve public confidence and trust

Strategic Direction

The mission, vision, and principles of the MCFRS inform these strategic directions:

- To maintain our operational readiness for an all-hazards mission and response capability, including emergency medical services, fire suppression, technical rescue, water/ice rescue, aviation fire-rescue, hazardous material, and explosive device emergency services by effective deployment and leverage of career and volunteer resources (i.e., staffing and equipment) in a fiscally responsible manner.
- To minimize the number of deaths and number/severity of injuries to our customers through a comprehensive, all-hazards, risk reduction strategy implemented through our community outreach program.
- To ensure that MCFRS embraces diversity and continuously recruits the career and volunteer personnel required to effectively deliver our services and programs, and undertakes the steps needed to address the current and projected training needs for career and volunteer

leadership and workforce development (e.g., PSTA classes, online training, in-service training, station drills, classes provided by the Maryland Fire-Rescue Institute, etc.) and retain these individuals for long-term service to the community.

- To provide for and enhance the wellness, safety, training, and development of our personnel, including implementation of risk reduction strategies to improve occupational safety and to improve the health and wellness of MCFRS personnel.
- To seek, create and maintain strong partnerships with municipal, regional, State and federal agencies, the citizenry, and private and nonprofit organizations and institutions within Montgomery County so that we may enhance our capabilities and responsiveness to their needs/concerns and leverage their collective capabilities to assist us in our life safety, community risk reduction, injury prevention and property protection efforts to keep the community safe.
- To maintain and grow our infrastructure, including facilities, apparatus, equipment, communications systems, and information technology systems to support our mission.
- To establish an organizational commitment to evaluate, develop, and implement new technologies and innovations on a continuous basis that will enhance the effective delivery of services and performance of business processes.
- To ensure the transparency of our business operations and that open lines of communication are maintained with our customers.
- To set a desirable and attainable course for the future through strategic planning and with the establishment and periodic reassessment and refinement of our mission, vision, strategic direction, and objectives.
- To evaluate our progress and strive for continual improvement through accreditation, program appraisals, performance measurement, and technological enhancements that allow for comprehensive analysis of all aspects of MCFRS operations and administration.

The MCFRS is committed to planning and a process of continuous self-improvement. In accordance with the [2016-2022 Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services, and Community Risk Reduction Master Plan](#), the vision and direction of Montgomery County leadership, and comprehensive review of existing conditions, service levels, and departmental practices, the MCFRS FY21 Strategic Plan outlines six objectives the MCFRS will undertake in order to move the department toward its vision.

Objective 1: Achieve and maintain the highest degree of readiness

Objective 2: Optimize assets to ensure mission success

Objective 3: Minimize preventable deaths and injuries and their negative impact

Objective 4: Provide for the wellbeing of the workforce

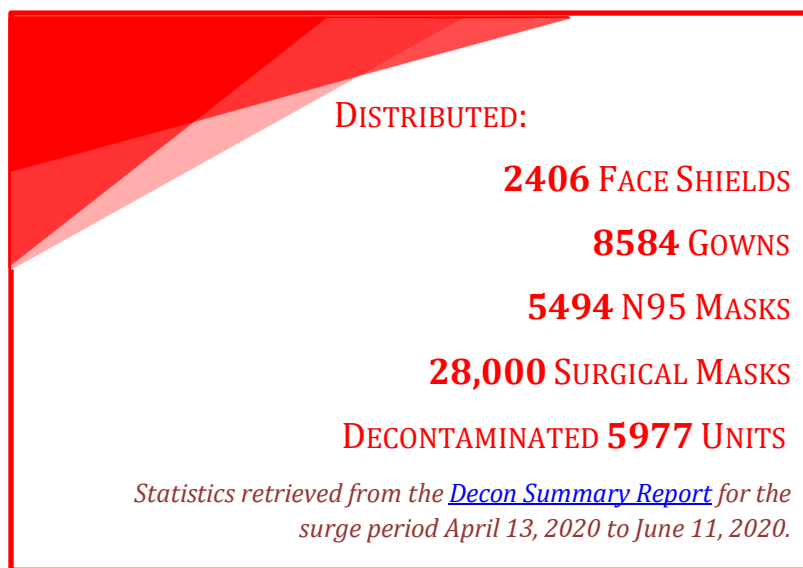
Objective 5: Build and maintain relationships with internal and external partners

Objective 6: Implement change to enhance performance

MCFRS YEAR IN REVIEW

COVID-19

For the last four months, the MCFRS uniformed personnel have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 public health crisis. Planning efforts began in February, and policies and procedures to handle the anticipated surge were in place by April. Behind the scenes, professional staff had to quickly adapt in order to provide the same level of service working from a remote environment.



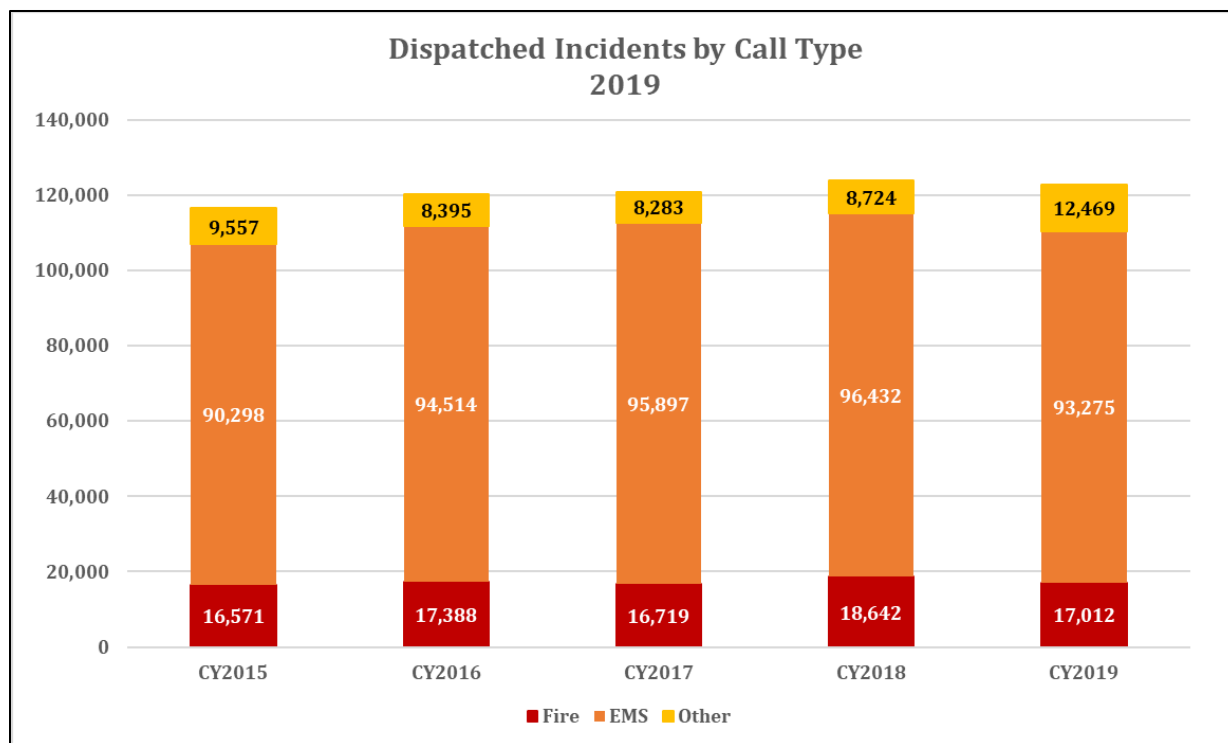
Despite a decline in calls for service over the last few months, workload increased in many instances, as personnel worked to ensure providers had the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE); decontamination procedures were established; procedures for emergency medical services were adjusted to mitigate risk; and claims for personnel exposed to COVID-19 were processed.

The MCFRS worked closely with our partners in Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS), the Office of Human Resources (OHR), our labor unions, and County leadership and staff to ensure services were delivered efficiently in an environment that changed daily. The MCFRS needs time to recover from the material, financial, and emotional stress of the COVID-19 response. Montgomery County is slowly starting to re-open, and the MCFRS has begun adjusting to the evolving preventive measures that will inevitably be in place for the foreseeable future. As more lessons are learned and we begin to fully understand and appreciate the impact that COVID-19 has had on the agency, the County, and the community, the MCFRS will be guided by the objectives of this plan, yet will remain flexible enough to shift strategic priorities and/or modify how they are implemented or delivered as circumstances change. The MCFRS is committed to operating within the framework of this plan to accomplish our objectives and continue providing exceptional fire and emergency services in the post-COVID landscape.

Activities and Accomplishments

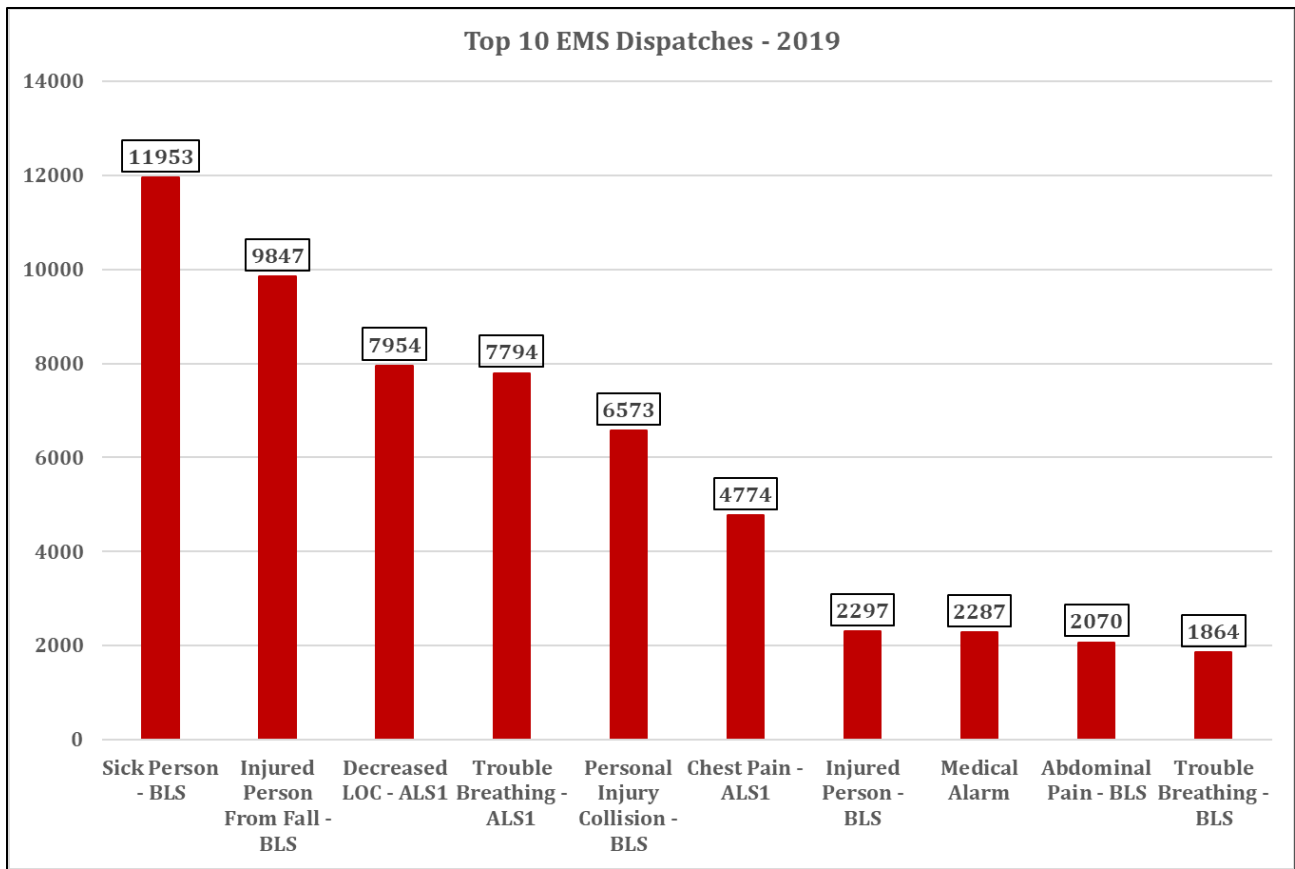
Despite the challenges of the last few months, the MCFRS was able to address many of its FY20 initiatives and had several significant accomplishments.

In calendar year 2019, the MCFRS was dispatched to nearly 123,000 calls for service, less than a 1% decline from the number of dispatched calls in 2018, but a 5.4% increase in dispatched call volume over the last five years, as the chart below illustrates.



EMS-related incidents made up 76% of the call volume in 2019, while fire-related incidents accounted for 13.8% of the call volume. Other incidents, which include mutual aid and service calls, increased in 2019 as a percentage of total calls (10.2%).

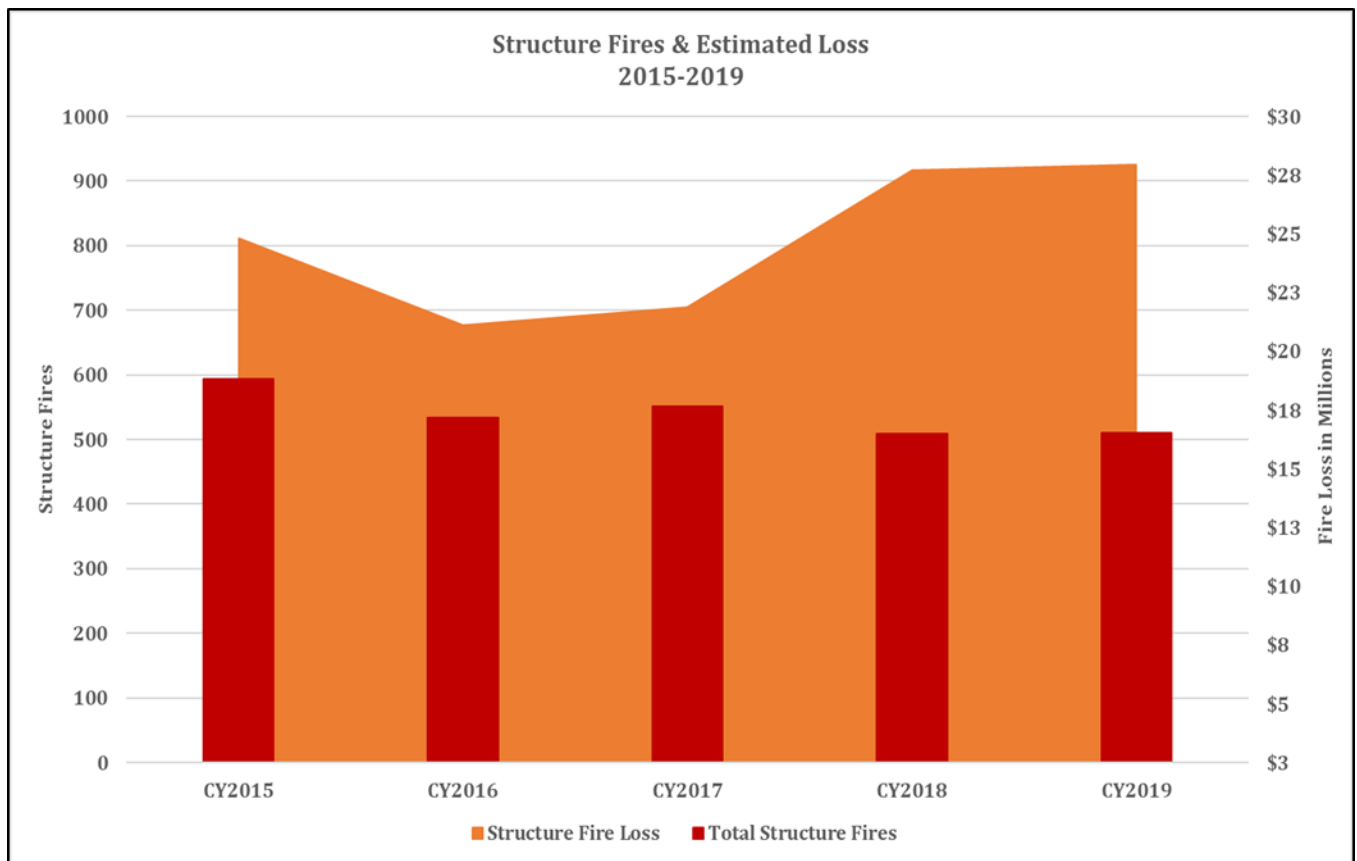




ALS incidents accounted for 46.4% of EMS calls. BLS incidents accounted for 53.6%.
 There were 72,050 transports to emergency rooms/departments in 2019.
 ALS response times and the percentage of cardiac patients with return of spontaneous circulation (ROSC) are performance measures in the MCFRS [Turn the Curve](#) agreement.

Fire Type	Count
Structure Fires	510
Vehicle Fires	299
Fires Outside of Structures	77
Fires in Brush, Grass	102
Fires in Rubbish (includes dumpsters)	104
All Other Fires	16
Total	1108

	Total Fires	Total Fire-Related Civilian Deaths
2015	1183	2
2016	1214	6
2017	1231	3
2018	1118	3
2019	1108	1



In 2019, there were 858 incidents dispatched as *Fire Full Assignment* (FFA). These are the most serious fire-related incidents, as the 9-1-1 call taker has learned from the caller that smoke or flame is visible within or outside a structure, making the incident more urgent and life-threatening. A full assignment of emergency vehicles is dispatched. The MCFRS determines appropriate resources through a comprehensive risk assessment and critical task analysis and classification of all hazards throughout the county, in accordance with the [CPSE accreditation model](#). Response times to FFA is also a crucial [performance measure](#).

Resources and Readiness

- ✓ The MCFRS purchased 24 new [Pierce Type I engines](#) (frontline). The new apparatus has more safety features than the older engines and is expected to reduce mechanical downtime.



- ✓ The MCFRS purchased and deployed ballistic protective equipment for use by personnel during high-risk acts of violence or potential acts of violence.
- ✓ The EMIHS Section purchased additional LUCAS automated chest compressing devices, capping a multi-year effort to outfit all MCFRS frontline engine companies.
- ✓ The MCFRS and several partner organizations piloted the Alternative Destination Program, which provides safe and affordable alternatives to emergency department care. Based on the EMT's assessment, patients could be transported to an urgent care facility, which provides the same quality care from qualified medical professionals, may be more efficient (faster), and may cost less than a hospital emergency department, depending on the patient's insurance and healthcare needs.
- ✓ The EMD *Protocol 37*, an interfacility transport protocol, became fully operational at the ECC in FY20. The protocol allows for the dispatch of fewer EMS resources to medical events occurring at approved healthcare centers (e.g., skilled nursing facilities, Kaiser Medical buildings) where certified medical professionals are on the premises 24/7 to provide immediate emergency care to patients with emergent medical needs.
- ✓ A new policy requiring EMS transport units leaving the hospital after a transport to place themselves into a newly created CAD status was implemented. This policy was designed to make units available sooner, which helps the community as EMS unit availability improves.
- ✓ The Operations Division improved swift water rescue and response capabilities by relocating the function from Station 25 to Station 14, to better address the swift water risk present within the upper portion of the Potomac River in the western County. Although there will not be dedicated minimum staffing there at this time, as there is at Stations 10 and 30, training of Station 14 personnel in swift water rescue will continue throughout FY21 so that Station 14 will eventually have two certified Swift Water Boat Operators (SWBOs) and two Swift Water Boat Crews (SWBC) on duty.
- ✓ The Volunteer Services Division continued to focus on improving the capacity of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) "Go Team" with monthly trainings, and three CERT Basic classes were offered to County residents.
- ✓ The Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department was awarded a SAFER grant for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Communications and Technology Enhancements

- ✓ Consolidation of universal call-takers (UCT) under the County Police Department continued, with an emphasis on training.

- ✓ The multi-year, regional, Motorola CAD-to-CAD project was completed in FY20. This regional effort enabled the ECC's Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to interface with several mutual aid partners' CAD systems. The interoperable systems enhance and expedite automatic aid processes and resource deployment with our mutual aid partners.
- ✓ Deccan's Live MUM™ (Move-up Module) became fully operational at the ECC and assists ECC personnel in transferring units to areas temporarily lacking adequate coverage due to one or more long-duration events in progress.
- ✓ Expanded the use of the FirstWatch™ application for EMS deployment analyses and leveraged the application's capabilities pertaining to EMD, EFD, and overall call-taking protocols. FirstWatch™ products in use by MCFRS are funded through a Maryland ERS grant.
- ✓ The Technical Operations Section (TechOps) equipped all fire-rescue apparatus with cellular devices and networked the devices with an application that allows for a continuously operating backup communications system in the event of a failure of the Public Safety Radio System.

Preventing Deaths and Injuries

- ✓ The Fire-Rescue Training Academy, with support from FROMS, increased the level of CPR outreach in an effort to increase the number of residents able to perform CPR prior to fire department arrival, thereby increasing the likelihood that a cardiac arrest patient will be able to attain return of spontaneous circulation.
- ✓ The MCFRS and our partners from OHR increased our public presence at malls and other public places during FY20, conducting basic health screening (i.e., blood pressure and blood sugar checks) on the weekends, with two events per quarter.
- ✓ In FY20, CERT trained and tested six new ASHI CPR/AED instructors, bringing the roster to 12 and making it possible to train many more County residents in CPR and AED use.

Community Risk Reduction

- ✓ The Community Outreach Section was organizationally realigned from the Volunteer Services Division to the Office of the Fire Chief and renamed the Community Risk Reduction Section. This reorganization enhances the Section's ability to interact with the Regional Services Centers and associated community groups having direct relationships with the Fire Chief (e.g., Citizen Advisory Boards), and enhances collaboration with the department's PIO in delivering safety educational messages to the public.
- ✓ Throughout FY20, the CRR team continued to build upon the momentum of its popular and successful Home Safety Visit program. This program is occasionally supported by station personnel through scheduled appointments with homeowners. Direct impact programs such as the Home Safety Visit program continue to ensure that homes belonging to the County's most

vulnerable residents have up-to-date smoke alarms and that residents possess the knowledge of what to do in the event of a fire. The CRR team also supports the department's very accomplished Montgomery County Mobile Integrated Health program, which identifies and matches high utilizers of 911 and emergency medical services (EMS) with more appropriate chronic care and social services offered by public and private providers in Montgomery County. These residents are often some of the most vulnerable in the community, aging in place, live alone and lack basic equipment such as smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and services provided by CRR to support the program. The result? Safer residents and a safer community.



- ✓ By partnering with MCPS programs targeting the most vulnerable in the community, the department can quickly provide key services and educational programs to enhance community safety. In FY20, MCFRS worked closely with several of the County's Title 1 public schools and the Linkages-to-Learning program, providing CRR educational outreach programs and activities. In partnership with Linkages to Learning and the Department of Recreation, MCFRS provided a bike safety program as part of the school's "Excel Beyond the Bell" program at Oak View Elementary School. The department applied for a grant to provide bike helmets to the students and the inaugural program was so popular and had such impact that it was expanded to include a dozen Summer Camp programs.
- ✓ In FY20, the CRR Section automated the scheduling of car seat safety checks/appointments, a multi-departmental effort that resulted in more efficient scheduling and enhanced reporting. In the first three quarters of FY20, MCFRS personnel had inspected and/or installed [1,876 car seats](#).



Planning & Accreditation

- ✓ Worked closely with the Chief Administrative Officer/CountyStat office to finalize the department's *Turn the Curve* Performance Agreement, which focuses on the department's [top three headline measures](#), including return-of-spontaneous-circulation (ROSC), 90th percentile response time for ALS incidents, and 90th percentile response time for Fire-Full Assignment incidents. The agreement also includes an *Effective Leadership* Addendum with approximately ten elements of leadership to be addressed by the MCFRS.

- ✓ The department continues to thrive as a result of its commitment to the CFAI accreditation program and process, which allows the MCFRS to continuously assess, evaluate, and make improvements in policies, procedures, and programs, raising the level of performance, safety, and effectiveness throughout the department. The accreditation process also ensures that all aspects of the MCFRS are working together to achieve organizational goals, and delivering top-notch, innovative emergency services. The MCFRS Accreditation program manager has worked collaboratively over the last year with leadership and personnel throughout the agency to complete the annual appraisals and other accreditation requirements; establish benchmarks and monitor unit and response time goals; and analyze risk within each response area. Our program manager has also contributed to significant improvements in data collection and analysis and has coordinated efforts to enhance the tools and technology used by the department to inform decision-making.

OBJECTIVE #1: ACHIEVE & MAINTAIN THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF READINESS

Office of the Fire Chief

1. Station 39 Site Evaluation

Following approval of the Program of Requirements (POR) for Montgomery Village Station 39, the site evaluation process will be initiated. Section Managers of both the Planning & Accreditation and the CIP & Facilities Sections, plus an Operations Division representative, will represent MCFRS on the site evaluation committee led by DGS. Site suitability criteria published in the 2016-2022 *Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services, and Community Risk Reduction Master Plan* will be explained to committee members by the MCFRS representatives and then used by the committee for identifying and evaluating candidate sites for Station 39.

Volunteer Services

1. Provision of CERT Basic Classes

In FY21, as many as four Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Basic classes will be offered to County residents by County CERT instructors. MC CERT will teach the NEW 2019 FEMA CERT guidelines. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and guidelines, the exact nature of each CERT Basic class will be adjusted to incorporate any social distancing restrictions. The FY20-21 MC CERT curriculum plan is based on offering a simplified CERT course to the general public, with an emphasis on individual and family preparedness. CERT is developing a series of 'advanced' and PSTA-based trainings for persons who graduate from the CERT basic course and wish to join the MC CERT team, including a field deployable team. These trainings will include CPR/AED, PPE, 800MHZ Radios, EVOC, and standard PSTA-based classes as determined by the DVS Chief.

2. Development of Expanded Certified ASHI CPR/AED Instructor Corps

In FY20, CERT began expanding its capacity to teach CPR and AED use to the public by expanding its instructor corps. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, some of the instructor training was unable to be administered. There are six people on standby to complete ASHI training once it is safe to do so.

3. Improvement of CERT Go Team Capabilities

The CERT leadership will continue developing the CERT "Go Team" through monthly field training and equipment acquisition. In FY21, MC CERT will acquire, fit out, and train drivers for CERT 700 (a refurbished ambulance). The CERT will establish a CERT base at the Community Support Building in Aspen Hill for CERT 700 and other equipment. The Go Team can be called upon to assist with searches for missing persons and for support to MCFRS during special events, such as parades, charity races/walks, and other large-scale community events.

4. Funding for Coordination among NCR CERT Teams

During FY21, the CERT Program Manager will continue efforts to seek and secure needed funding to operate and expand the County's CERT Program above and beyond the limited funding allocated within the MCFRS budget. Foremost, federal Homeland Security grant monies will, as in past years, be sought through the County's Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security. The CERT also receives a moderate amount of donations from individuals, organizations and businesses from time to time that helps to fund the purchase of new equipment and training.

The MC CERT Program Manager will hold a leadership role in the expansion and development of the consortium of CERT teams in the National Capital Region. The NCR consortium consists of CERT teams in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax County, Virginia; Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County, and Montgomery County, Maryland, and Washington, DC. In FY21 the NCR consortium plans to create a 501c3 designation to increase the ability to collaborate, share training resources, and operate collectively.

5. Improve Training and Rostering Capabilities for Volunteer Command Officers

In FY21, Volunteer Services seeks to expand training and rostering capabilities for volunteer command officers to fill Volunteer Duty Operations Chief (VDOC) and Volunteer Battalion Chief assignments, as well as develop a Volunteer Officers Leadership Academy to train and expand middle management ranks at the LFRDs.

Support Services

1. Installation and Testing of the Public Safety Radio System

MCFRS, in coordination with DTS and other public safety partners, will complete the installation and testing of the new Public Safety Radio System in FY21.

2. Evaluate Technology for Transition to Next Generation MDC

The Public Safety Logistics Section's Technical Operations Section (TechOps) will evaluate technologies and begin the transition to the next generation of mobile data computers (MDC) for fire apparatus.

3. Station 25 Expansion/Renovation

Construction at Station 25, which was initiated during FY19, was expected to be completed by June 2020, but has been delayed. The project involves extensive renovation and expansion of the living/working quarters, plus the addition of two apparatus bays and other space between the existing bays and new bays to be used for gear storage and decontamination purposes. There will be a mezzanine level above this new space for HVAC equipment. The project will be accomplished in two phases; thus, allowing Station 25 to remain operational during construction, aided by two large trailers placed behind the station that are occupied during Phase 2. Anticipated completion is November 2020.

4. Station 35 Construction Process

The sewer line extension through the Clarksburg Historic District to the fire station site, as well as the lift station, was completed in FY20. Facility design for this two-story fire station began in FY20. However, due to the economic challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the bidding and selection process has been delayed until FY22.

5. White Flint Fire Station

Although MCFRS anticipated the design for White Flint (a.k.a., “Pike District”) Fire Station 43 to be finalized in FY20, this project has been placed on hold by the County Executive. The two-story station will have five apparatus bays housing a paramedic engine, aerial unit, and three EMS units. Most of the apparatus will be relocated to Station 43 from Station 23 which will remain operational to some level. While the 1st floor of the new station will be occupied solely by MCFRS, the 2nd floor will have offices shared by the Montgomery County Police and the White Flint Urban District.



Aerials: 15 Frontline, 10 Reserve



Tankers: 8 Frontline, 1 Reserve



**EMS Units: 50 Frontline,
23 Reserve**



Engines: 35 Frontline, 27 Reserve



**Rescue Squad: 6 Frontline,
3 Reserve**

6. Fill Vacant Equipment Services Coordinator and Emergency Vehicle Technician Positions

Fleet Operations includes Fleet Support and Fleet Maintenance, two essential units to the success of the MCFRS. Fleet Support acquires and disposes of fire and rescue apparatus and vehicles, tools, hose, and other equipment. Fleet Support also coordinates hose testing, third party inspections of ground ladders, and preventative maintenance programs for hydraulic rescue tools and other equipment. Fleet Maintenance conducts and provides maintenance of all fire and rescue heavy apparatus and ensures MCFRS compliance with all state and federal regulations

pertaining to emissions, inspections, and safe vehicle operations. Vacancies within these units can significantly disrupt support services that are critical to fire and rescue operations.

7. Tractor-Drawn Aerials and Aerial Towers Replacement

MCFRS has initiated the design and request for qualifications (RFQ) process to select, contract, and order five tractor-drawn aerials and four aerial tower trucks as part of the department's apparatus replacement program.

OBJECTIVE #2: OPTIMIZE ASSETS TO ENSURE MISSION SUCCESS

Office of the Fire Chief

1. Emergency Response Performance Benchmarks

The CFAI accreditation framework is used by MCFRS to focus on performance measurement, self-assessment and quality improvement. MCFRS manages its current deployment and performance through monitoring of the quality of emergency response performance for each service type within each planning zone and total response area. In 2019, the MCFRS adopted the CFAI-recommended population density zones model, which consists of two categories: urban and rural. In the first quarter of FY21, the Planning & Accreditation Section will be revising the department's performance benchmarks for first arriving units and the effective response force for each of the department's programs/services. These benchmarks, along with ongoing risk classification and analysis allows the MCFRS to determine response strategies for the provision of consistent service delivery.

Operations

1. Deployment Analysis – BLS/ALS/Transport Units

The EMIHS Section will continue performing a comprehensive deployment analysis of MCFRS response vehicles pertaining to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) deliverables (e.g., Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport units, paramedic chase units, and paramedic engines). Detailed statistics will be pulled from the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, our data warehouse, and ePCR reports and will be analyzed through MCFRS' FirstWatch and Deccan data analysis applications. The analysis will examine the MCFRS unit numeric time variables (e.g. total responses, dispatch specifics to include day of week, time of day, etc.), to include total response time, on scene time, cycle time, etc. This analysis will also evaluate the current response framework for the purposes of optimizing MCFRS' current deployment of existing resources (i.e. response platforms and personnel), further maximizing efficiencies and effectiveness of the EMS deliverables. For example, EMIHS will explore options to deliver assessments and care on low-level calls (Alpha and Omega) to reduce service demand and hospital overcrowding and look at potential partnerships with HHS to respond to "repeat" customers.

Support Services

1. Rebuilding the IT Section (Staffing)

The MCFRS Information Technology Section has several vacancies (Application team) and the manager retires this year. It is crucial that these positions be filled quickly, to avoid disruption to critical daily operations and technology maintenance.

2. Migration of the S-drive

The Department of Technology Services (DTS) took efforts to begin eliminating the countywide S-drive during FY20. The MCFRS IT Section will work with MCFRS managers and staff to finalize file migration to the MCFRS SharePoint and set up an internal network drive to address shared storage needs that cannot be addressed by Share Point.

3. Server Migration

The MCFRS IT Section will remove or replace all Windows 2008 servers and complete server migration to the County Office Building's data center, which will be the secondary data center.

4. Replace IT Training System

Although the PSTA has its own database for training records, the MCFRS IT Section also maintains its own separate database for technology training records. Over the years, the IT Section's database has expanded to include a variety of department training projects. These projects range from yearly department requirements (e.g., annual recertifications) to county requirements (e.g., EEO/Harassment Refresher) and federal requirements (e.g., HIPAA). Both systems are outdated, and due to new DTS policy, the systems need to be replaced for a few technical reasons (e.g., higher security standards). This strategy explores options and reviews commercial, off-the-shelf (COTS) learning content management systems (LCMS) to replace both databases and unify FRS training records in one place, providing a single transcript for each user for the first time in nearly two decades. The new LCMS should encompass all formal face-to-face classes, as well as e-learning classes (synchronous and asynchronous) from both sections (PSTA and tech training). Additionally, the special training projects which have not historically been encompassed in PSTA training, nor part of the tech training curriculum, but deemed as important for all personnel, will be included in the new LCMS.

Fiscal Management

1. Redundancy for Key Roles in Fiscal Management

As there is a need for creating redundancy of duties and responsibilities within the Division, Fiscal Management personnel will continue to learn how to perform each other's duties. When a colleague is on leave or when a position has been vacated, the associated duties of that position will be covered by another Fiscal Management Division employee. This will ensure that all vital duties and priorities of the Division are achieved on a timely basis even when employees are absent. By having backup duties, employees will broaden their knowledge/skill set which will increase their usefulness to the Division and may help employees with future promotions or lateral moves within the department.

2. Develop New Contracts

The Procurement Section will continue to assist Fleet Support with identifying new contract opportunities for the inspection, maintenance, and repair of fire apparatus and developing new/additional contracts in accordance with County procurement regulations, policies and

procedures. New contracts will ensure timely acquisition and payment of goods and services provided to MCFRS by vendors.

3. EMST Compliance with Medicare Regulations

The EMS Billing Section will continue to ensure the program's full compliance with Medicare regulations during FY21.

4. EMST Cost Recovery

The EMS Billing Office will make every effort to maximize cost recovery during FY21 by improving documentation within the EMIHS Section. Innovative technologies will be employed to make ePCR completion by EMIHS providers less arduous and ensure standardization of reporting.

OBJECTIVE #3: MINIMIZE PREVENTABLE DEATHS & INJURIES AND THEIR NEGATIVE IMPACT

Office of the Fire Chief

1. Enhancement of *Safety in Our Neighborhood* Program

In FY20, the department realigned its decades old *Safety in Our Neighborhood* (SION) program so that the Community Risk Reduction Section could collaborate with the Volunteer Services Division. In FY21, the CRR Section will expand, recruit, train, and incorporate volunteers and CERT members into established and future CRR campaigns, initiatives, and programs.

2. Expand the File of Life Program

The MCFRS [File of Life](#) (FOL) program benefits seniors and individuals with chronic or severe medical conditions and/or developmental disabilities by enabling MCFRS personnel to obtain a quick and accurate medical history when a patient or family member is not able to provide one. The File of Life contains important medical and insurance information, emergency contacts for family members and doctors, and other special circumstances that rescue personnel should know in caring for you. Based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, the CRR Section will focus on an assessment of FOL forms, printing, and mailing/distribution, and expanding the program, while also coordinating with the Department of Health and Human Services, which operates a similar program. With current fiscal challenges, it's important to leverage existing resources to provide a comprehensive service to the community and avoid duplication of efforts. MCFRS is well-positioned to demonstrate the need and successes of the FOL, while ensuring widespread implementation to the most vulnerable residents of Montgomery County.

Operations

1. Expansion of Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH)

In FY20, the EMIHS Section applied for participation in the Emergency Triage, Treat, and Transport (ET3) Program. A federally funded pilot program, ET3 is administered by the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation, an organization under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Through this program, MCFRS anticipates expanding its MIH services to include telehealth service and the Emergency Communications Nurse System.

2. Emergency Communications Nurse System

The Emergency Communications Nurse System (ECNS) is a nurse triage system comprised of over 200 protocols designed to be implemented within a communications center and used in conjunction with IAED's Medical Priority Dispatch System. A benefit of ECNS for MCFRS is the anticipated reduction in the number of EMS transports of patients with low-acuity determinant codes, which may, in turn, offset the need for additional transport units. In FY21, the MCFRS and the MCPD will plan for the establishment of the ECNS at the County's ECC, which will include determining which department will provide nurses for the ECNS – MCFRS or MCPD.

OBJECTIVE #4: PROVIDE FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE WORKFORCE

Operations

1. Update the *Emergency Incident Personnel Rehabilitation Policy and Procedures*

The physical and mental demands of firefighting and other emergency operations can create conditions that can have an adverse impact on the safety and health of first responders. Rehabilitation (to restore or bring to a condition of health or useful and constructive activity) on the incident scene to prevent more serious conditions is essential. The Operations Division will review the Emergency Incident Personnel Rehabilitation Policy and Procedures (1995) to ensure it is in compliance with NFPA Standard 1584, which establishes the minimum criteria for developing and implementing a rehabilitation process for fire department members at incident scene operations and training exercises. *Note: The NFPA is currently working on a revision to this standard, which was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The current standard is dated 2015.*

Support Services

1. Facility Upgrades - Wellness and Safety-Related

The following facility upgrades relating to the safety and well-being of the workforce will be continued and/or initiated in FY21:

- Evaluation and retrofit of Plymovent™ Exhaust Collection Systems at all stations
- HVAC Control Panel Replacement: Station 3
- Install fall-protection system at the Central Maintenance Facility

2. Level-of-Effort Projects

The following “Level of Effort” Capital Improvement Projects (i.e., designated system upgrades or replacements) are planned and funded for implementation during FY21.

- HVAC System Replacement: Stations 8, 26, 31 (delayed in FY20 due to COVID-19)
- Generator Replacement: Stations 1, 11
- Roof Replacement: Station 8
- Parking, Access Ways, and Sidewalk Resurfacing: Stations 8, 10
- Female Facilities: Station 30
- Apparatus Bay Doors Replacement: Stations 15, 17, 31 (delayed in FY20 due to COVID-19)
- Replace windows: Station 26 (delayed in FY20 due to COVID-19)
- Replace entrance/exit doors: Stations 5, 7, 20 (delayed in FY20 due to COVID-19)
- Assist R2 with elevator installation project
- Repair stormwater capture system: Station 12
- Stop severe water infiltration into basement: Station 30

While these are DGS-managed projects, the MCFRS Facilities Section Manager will have ongoing coordination, guidance and oversight responsibilities in support of DGS.

3. Facility Maintenance Projects

The projects listed below pertaining to facility maintenance and upgrades will be addressed during FY21 to the greatest extent possible based on allocated funding. Projects remaining after allocated funding has been used will be addressed as additional funding becomes available.

- Kitchen Expansion/Upgrading: Station 31
- Cleanout/Servicing of Oil & Grit Separators: All stations
- Cleanout/Servicing of Grease Pits: Stations having grease pits
- Buildout of Facility Maintenance Warehousing Capacity: Station 32 and CSB (in progress; delayed by COVID-19)
- Interior Painting (certain areas): Stations 5 and 6
- Interior Furnishing Upgrades
- Projects Recommended in Overall Building Evaluation: Station 26

Human Resources

1. Health & Wellness Station Visits

Working with partners from INOVA Occupational Health and Montgomery County Office of Human Resources, FROMS personnel will facilitate a series of health & wellness visits designed to ensure that MCFRS personnel are aware of the full range of benefits (wellness, mental health, nutrition) offered by the County to support members' health & wellness. The goal is to offer one station wellness visit per week.

2. Develop New Respiratory Protection Policy

Lessons learned from past and current circumstances have highlighted the need for a unified approach to respiratory protection, including post-fire environments and protection against airborne pathogens. MCFRS recently started working on a draft policy and are preparing for collaboration with our public health partners. It is anticipated that this policy will be completed in FY21.

OBJECTIVE #5: BUILD & MAINTAIN STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH INTERNAL & EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Office of the Fire Chief

1. Expand the Community Engagement Unit

The MCFRS is a community service organization that generally engages with the residents at a time of need, during a period of crisis where the residents (911 callers) are under extreme stress. The MCFRS Community Engagement (FRSCE) Unit typically focuses on building relationships with underserved or disadvantaged community members and then uses those relationship to enhance the stature of public safety, while also educating about fire safety and injury prevention. The MCFRS acknowledges the need to work more diligently to have comprehensive and far-reaching community contacts and interactions, to support thriving youth and families, and create safe neighborhoods and a welcoming county.

The FRSCE Unit will continue to develop and maintain relationships with various County agencies and with unrepresented or disadvantaged cohorts within the County, in order to forge and sustain positive bonds between those groups and FRS, and County government as a whole. The FRSCE will ensure representatives are present at the following meetings:

- NAACP monthly meetings
- LGBTQ forums and dialogs
- Faith Community Advisory Council forums, discussions, and events
- Selected/specified events from Reverend Kaseman, Director Stowe, and Director Vu
- Youth and family events with Montgomery Housing Partnership

2. Community-Based Initiatives for Non-English-Speaking Residents

Partnering with community organizations provides MCFRS an unprecedented opportunity to not only meet the community members they serve but to share safety-related best-practices and to increase awareness of fire safety and injury prevention through neighborhood meetings and events. One of the biggest obstacles to ensuring equity for all Montgomery County residents is the language barrier, which has hindered the availability and delivery of important risk reduction programs to certain communities. During FY21, the department will continue to identify and establish initiatives that connect station personnel with MCPS, places of worship, and other community-based programs that appeal to large numbers of non-English-speaking residents.

Operations

1. Reinstating Use of Customer Service Surveys

In support of Chief Administrative Officer Andrew Kleine's vision of broadening Montgomery County's focus on accurately measuring customer satisfaction, the MCFRS will seek to promote a web-based customer service survey. This tool will replace a paper-based model which has been

labor intensive and increasingly cumbersome in applying to modern-day practice (e.g. survey distribution, data collection, statistical aggregation and analysis), demonstrated marginalized utility to effectively measure customer satisfaction, and resulted in a low rate-of-return, historically.

Instituting an online format would enable customers receiving emergency medical services provided by MCFRS personnel to be asked to complete the evaluation tool. Aggregated data would be periodically analyzed to gauge perceived performance by the MCFRS, affect service improvements, and streamline reporting obligations to stakeholders (e.g. CountyStat).

To facilitate the survey approach, MCFRS is actively exploring the feasibility of leveraging our Emergency Medical Services Transport (EMST) billing vendor's ability to solicit customers (e.g. patients) to complete the online surveys. This approach maximizes the opportunities for securing timely and detailed customer feedback, in a standardized and readily retrievable format, and with minimal impacts on overhead.

Human Resources

1. Establish a Countywide PPE Committee

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for consistency in personal protective equipment (PPE) specifications, respiratory protection programs, and PPE distribution frameworks. The establishment of a PPE Committee would facilitate a coordinated research and development capability within MCFRS that would work in a coordinated effort with other County agencies to development and implement standardized, effective PPE practices, standard operating procedures, and equipment in a fiscally responsible manner.

2. Increase Interaction with Public Health Partners

Another lesson learned from the COVID-19 crisis is the need for increased collaboration and communication with our public health partners in Montgomery County. Consistent communication (i.e., monthly meeting) with public health partners, focusing on disease surveillance, monitoring, and other public health issues, increases the likelihood of earlier warning of impending future crises and enables more significant proactive planning and preparedness efforts to occur.

3. Establish a Public Safety Mental Health Committee

The mental health and well-being of public safety employees remains a crucial component of the MCFRS health and wellness program. The establishment of a committee allows for a more robust sharing of ideas, practices and information across public safety. A committee, comprised of leadership from MCFRS, IAFF, OHR, HHS, and other public safety partners can work to identify and address mental health needs and develop solutions to ensure the wellbeing of public safety personnel.

OBJECTIVE #6: IMPLEMENT CHANGE TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE

Office of the Fire Chief

1. Recommendations of 2018 Peer Assessment Team

The MCFRS had its last site visit from a CFAI Peer Assessment Team in April 2018. Their final report contained four strategic recommendations (relating to core competencies) and eleven specific recommendations (relating to non-core competencies) for the MCFRS to address. Led by the Accreditation Program Manager, the MCFRS has reacted to the strategic recommendations and will be responding to the following non-core competency recommendations over the next two years:

- 2A: It is recommended that the department develop a methodology to record data related to human and physical assets preserved and/or saved.
- 6C: It is recommended that the department update the Acquisition of Fire and Rescue Apparatus policy to provide clear direction in the criteria for acquiring new apparatus.
- 6F: It is recommended that the department formalize a process for both distribution and recovery of all issued equipment.
- 7A: It is recommended that the department analyze staffing needs and workloads to provide for increased efficiencies whether through staffing or work processes.
- 8A: It is recommended that the department encourage professional credentialing as a component of the command and staff development program.
- 9A: It is recommended that the department establish a regular schedule of interactions with each of the three water purveyors servicing the response area to establish a working relationship and open exchange of information and data.
- 9B: a) It is recommended that the ECC ensure that as the consolidation process moves forward, steps are taken to balance the available resources with the workload demands to ensure consistent and reliable communications effectively support field units. b) It is recommended the department explore, analyze, and implement steps to reduce call processing time.
- 9C: It is recommended that the department develop a policy on record retention and destruction in accordance with all applicable rules and requirements.
- 10A: It is recommended that the department work with their legal counsel to ensure that all current and future agreements with external agencies incorporate a conflict resolution statement.
- 10B: It is recommended that the department establish a formal review timeline to determine the operational effectiveness of external agency agreements and ensure that they continue to support departmental objectives.

2. Development of Racial Equity and Social Justice Action Plan

In accordance with Montgomery County [Bill 27-19](#), the MCFRS will select an Equity Officer and begin drafting a Racial Equity and Social Justice Action Plan in FY21. Racial equity and social justice are urgent moral and socioeconomic endeavors for our County, and the MCFRS is committed to ensuring that racial equity and social justice are core principles in all decisions, policies, and functions of the department. The plan will help MCFRS normalize and institutionalize the concepts of equity and social justice and guide the department's actions as it seeks to proactively understand and address systemic racial inequities — both in the organization and throughout the County.

3. Technological Enhancements to Reduce Risk in the Community

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted public safety services in a number of ways, including the department's ability to continue providing community risk reduction programs. It is anticipated that the effects of the pandemic will be long-lasting, and that community members will increasingly rely on video and virtual formats to communicate with each other and educate themselves. In FY21, the CRR Section plans to renovate, reformat, and expand the Spanish resources available on the website to more closely mirror the English portal, in order to more effectively convey information to Spanish-speaking Montgomery County residents. In addition, the CRR is exploring methods to improve the delivery of Home Safety Checks, such as the use of FaceTime and other remote platforms, when existing conditions do not allow for direct contact.

4. Completion/Implementation of CRR Data Tracking System

During FY19, the Community Risk Reduction Section began developing an App that will provide the technological foundation to automate data collection and dynamically create reports using geo-based mobile computing. It allows command staff to assign tasks and inspections and monitor the time spent on each task, the results, and any follow-up actions that may be needed. Pilot-testing was completed in FY20. The department will look at implementing this initiative in FY21.

5. Expansion/Modification of Social Media Platforms

During FY21, the MCFRS PIO will continue to evaluate, modify, and expand social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and others. The use of various social media platforms has proven to be a low-cost, efficient means of keeping the public informed and educating the community about safety programs and initiatives. Social media tools can help MCFRS communicate with the public during emergencies, build situational awareness, and assist in recovery efforts. The PIO will expand the use of a micro-blog to provide incident-centric information as well as to expand dialogue regarding MCFRS events and activities. In coordination with CountyStat and the County PIO, the MCFRS PIO will explore and develop additional uses for nextdoor.com.

Operations

1. Improvement of Call-Processing Times

The ECC will continue implementing strategies identified during FY20 to reduce call-processing times for Fire - Full Assignments and Echo/ALS2 events to comply with the latest edition of NFPA 1221, Operations Division benchmarks, and established CFAI performance measures. The ECC will also focus on improving compliance with Priority Dispatch Protocols, reducing errors in call processing by utilizing a standardized quality assurance process, and achieving >90% average protocol compliance scores for call-taking on all Fire - Full Assignments and Echo/ALS2 events.

2. Achievement of ACE Accreditation

Efforts will continue in FY21 toward achieving the accreditation requirements of the Accreditation Center for Excellence (ACE) of the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch (IAED). A more robust quality assurance (QA) of quarterly call-taking and dispatch data, using AQUA software will be implemented. The MCFRS, in partnership with the MCPD (primary responsibility for the ECC) will collaborate with ECC personnel as they focus on the self-assessment process and preparation of required paperwork to demonstrate proficiency to the IAED and adherence to the IAED Code of Ethics. Achievement of ACE accreditation should result in improved performance and efficiency in call-processing and dispatch.

3. CAD2GIS

CAD2GIS technological enhancements will expedite automatic aid processes and resource deployment by leveraging automatic vehicle locator (AVL)/automatic routing logic (ARL) capabilities.

4. EMIHS Technology Initiatives

The EMIHS Section will explore options to improve clinical documentation and patient care, including the implementation of an automated QA/QI program; expanded FirstWatch surveillance tools (ProQA); and development of online narcotics logs and ALS equipment checklists.

5. Live SharePoint Dashboards for Special Operations

Throughout FY21, MCFRS will work to set up SharePoint sites for the Water-Ice Rescue, Hazmat, and Technical Rescue programs. When all programs are on a SharePoint site, live dashboards will be created to allow Special Operations data to be viewed and analyzed at any time.

6. Implement Staffing Ratio of 5.0 to 1

Efforts will continue in FY21 to address the staffing deficiency within MCFRS. Presently, MCFRS is approximately 160 FTEs short of achieving proper staffing based upon current service demand (the desired coefficient is 5.0 fulltime equivalents (FTEs) per 24-hour position (i.e., 5.0 to 1) and 2.0 FTEs per 10-hour position). The County Executive's *recommended* FY21 Operating Budget Request includes 20 new FTEs to help address this shortfall. The department intends to address this issue incrementally on an annual basis.

Volunteer Services

1. Filling of LOSAP Administrator's Position

The vacant Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) administrator's position (Administrative Specialist II, Grade 21) was anticipated to be filled in FY20. However, it was delayed due to the pandemic outbreak. The LOSAP administrator's duties have been handled for the last three years by another Volunteer Services Division employee as collateral duties funded with overtime monies.

2. Filling of Administrative Specialist's Position

The Volunteer Services' Administrative Specialist position is critical to the overall administration and maintenance of records for the division. This position will become vacant at the beginning of FY21 as a result of the current specialist's retirement. It is imperative that this vacancy be filled immediately.

Human Resources

1. Increase the Department's Capacity to Telework

The COVID-19 public health crisis caused many changes to how agencies operate, but most significantly, the number of people who worked from home increased. There have been and will continue to be lessons learned from this period. It is imperative that MCFRS review pertinent data collected from the past several months to better understand the potential of telework and the impact it has on MCFRS service and explore ways that technology and policy can help the department manage risk while still providing efficient services.

2. Redesign PSTA Courses to Reduce In-Person Attendance

In FY20, the MCFRS PSTA began exploring ways to reduce in-person attendance at the academy (i.e., battalion field drills in the field). This approach assists Operations with improving ALS and Fire-Full Assignment response times by reducing the amount of time units spend moving to and from training activities at the PSTA. This effort will continue in FY21, as the recent pandemic highlighted the need to develop plans to ensure continuity of certain activities.

Support Services

1. Fleet Management Software

The current fleet management software (FMS) used by MCFRS and County Fleet runs on Windows Server 2003 and has many shortfalls:

- It is unstable, with outages or disruptions several times a week. It is slow to log in, and routinely slow to operate.
- It has a limited number of users who can be logged in at the same time and there are routinely users waiting to get in.

- It is very challenging for a non-IT person to run reports or create reports.
- MCFRS does not use the automated repair schedule because any changes made for one of the two users affects the other.

A new fleet management software program will allow Fleet Operations to separate controls and parameters for all users, fleets, and vehicles; allow for an unlimited number of users across multiple platforms, including mobile; increase stability and capacity; and ease data collection and reporting.

Front Line

35 Engines

- All Paramedic Engines

15 Aerials (also AT751 at NIH)

- 4-person (1), 3-person (14)

6 Rescue Squads

31 Ambulances

12 Medic Units (Includes M741)

2 ALS chase cars

8 Tankers

2 Fire Investigators

9 Command Staff

- 5 Battalions / 1 Duty Chief
- 2 EMS Duty Officers/ 1 Safety Officer

Support

4 Brush Engines

13 Brush Trucks

9 Boats – Inflatable

9 Boat Supports

7 UTVs

2 Hazmat Units

2 Medical Ambulance Buses

2 Medical Care Support

1 Decon Unit

2 Tech Rescue Vehicles

2 Mobile Air Units

2 Mobile Command Units